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Impacts on food policy from traditional and social media framing of moral outrage and cultural stereotypes

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Abstract
Food policy increasingly attempts to accommodate a wider and more diverse range of stakeholder interests. However, the emerging influence of different communities and networks of actors with localized concerns and interests around how food should be produced and traded, can challenge attempts to achieving more open, sustainable and globally-integrated food chains. This article analyses how cultural factors internal to a developed country can disrupt the export of food to a developing country. A framing analysis is applied to examine how activists using social media to interact with the traditional news media in Australia were able to inflame public opinion and provoke outrage to disrupt the policy agenda. The paper contains a case study analysis of the media controversy in 2011 around the slaughter of beef cattle in Indonesian abattoirs and the subsequent banning of live cattle exports to Indonesia by Australia. The analysis draws on the theory of binary cultural oppositions to examine how practices in relation to the slaughter of beef cattle in Indonesia were reframed, through extensive media coverage of moral outrage into a critique of the values and cultural practices of Indonesian society.

Keywords Food policy · Moral outrage · Framing analysis · Agenda setting · News media · Social media

Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AUD	Australian Dollar
DOA	Department of Agriculture
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
VALE	Veterinarians Against Live Export

Introduction

The role of consumer preferences in relation to the way food is sourced, transported and labelled across the global food chain has been identified as a demand factor in the food policy arena that needs to be considered, in addition to economic factors (Traill 1998). More recently, complex interactions have emerged due to the evolving and complex social and political involvement of actors in international food markets (Devereux 2001; Hinrichs 2013). The emerging influence of different communities and networks of actors with localised concerns and interests around how food should be produced and traded constitute a challenge to attempts to achieve more open, sustainable and globally-integrated food chains (Arcari 2017; Singer 2015). Instead of a consensus framing on understandings of food security and food policy, more generally, views and perspectives emerge that can create difficulties for political actors to achieve coherency around matters of food policy (Brooks 2014; Mooney and Hunt 2009).

An increasingly influential theme in the discourses around food policy can be identified as one of being environmentally-friendly and valuing sustainability (Patriotta et al. 2011; Hinrichs 2013). This environmentally-focused worldview could be expected to be integrated with the existing discourses around food policy that incorporate issues such as efficiency across food chains, the relative healthiness of different foods, global versus local production, the concentration of food retailers, food trade integration and food insecurity (Friedmann 2005; Traill 1998). However, there are signs that some of these habitat-friendly views, especially issues in relation to livestock production, are not being integrated with wider food policy discourses, but instead are driving partial, and incomplete, formulations of food policy.

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Notable cases in point have been the bans imposed on the live export of cattle and sheep from Australia over the last few decades. Early concerns were expressed by veterinarians around animal welfare issues and regulating product quality, but by 2002 after a number of occasions where large numbers of animals had died at sea in transit, animal activists pushed for the live export trade to be banned entirely (Petrie 2016; Wright and Muzzatti 2007). The discourses around subsequent bans on live animal exports indicated a shift from attempts to achieve a multi-stakeholder perspective on food policy to the dominance of a single issue (Breeman et al. 2015). This article explores a situation where micro-interests can be framed to mobilise support at a macro-level to change aspects of food policy. The framing around emotive, cultural and values-based issues generates public outrage that results in a momentum of political pressure that can lead to distortionary changes to food policy.

The particular case study of interest to this paper was when social activists mobilized online after an investigative report, *A Bloody Business*, was televised nationally on the Australian publicly-funded broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on 30 May 2011. This article considers the subsequent banning of beef exports by Australia to Indonesia in 2011 after the animal slaughtering videos were televised on the ABC's flagship, national, current affairs television program, Four Corners. The program detailed mistreatment of Australian cattle at four Indonesian abattoirs. A synopsis of the program added subsequently to the program's web-page said: "After broadcast, the report provoked a powerful response from the public who demanded an end to the export of live cattle to Indonesia and prompted wide media coverage which dominated the news for weeks" (ABC 2011a).

Our general research question was: to what extent do campaigns driven by social activism generate wider integration of stakeholder interests in food policy? This paper interrogates the public pressure originating from the initial investigative news report, the subsequent contributions of social and online media, and, the role of social activist groups, in influencing an issue of food policy, namely, the federal government banning of live cattle exports to Indonesia in 2011. The researchers conducted an analysis of news report reactions in the days after the program went to air and noted the main players mentioned, or quoted, in the reports. The researchers collected information from activist websites where they described their reaction to the ABC Four Corners news report and legitimized their stance. We also searched these groups' Facebook accounts and Twitter feeds, noting postings and reactions to the trigger news report by themselves and by activist online 'friends'. This telecast of the report is what is referred to as a 'trigger event'. Agenda-setting in the news can be sparked by a trigger event where a specific event is embedded with meaning by being attached to a wider issue and, in turn, the event can be used to draw attention to an issue and mobilize action (Dearing and Rogers 1996).

Cultural pressures can be framed in an emotive manner that eclipse discourses that recognize an intersection between different stakeholder interests and, instead, promote a single-issue understanding. In the case of the 2011 Australian beef bans to Indonesia, a conflation of cultural issues can be identified that obscured multi-stakeholder interests. Existing concerns over animal welfare failures on-board ship transport were amplified with secretly filmed videos by an animal rights activist from Animals Australia of the mistreatment of cattle in Indonesian abattoirs (Callaghan 2011). The footage showed cattle being mistreated by having their tails broken, their eyes and noses gouged, tendons cut, water forced up their nostrils and one was repeatedly beaten to stand after it had had its leg broken by the abattoir workers (Kirby 2011).

A representative of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) was interviewed as part of the ABC's 45-min program. The report was presented as if it was representative of all slaughter practices in Indonesian abattoirs and even though only four abattoirs were filmed for the television program, 11 were referred to in the coverage. However, there are more than 770 abattoirs in Indonesia (The Guardian 2011). So, although only 11 abattoirs were reported as having deficient standards, in the ensuing media storm, the issue of mistreatment was associated with all abattoirs in Indonesia (Alford 2011). There were later allegations that some of the ill-treatment of the animals was staged by the video-maker (Thompson 2011) and 3 days after the broadcast, an Indonesian government spokesman disputed the authenticity of the videos saying that the accuracy of the footage was yet to be determined (ABC 2011b). The Chief Executive of the Australian Agricultural Company said: "Australia could promote more humane treatment of animals and higher-standard facilities in Indonesian abattoirs but had no sovereign power to go into any country and change it" (The Sydney Morning Herald 2011a, para 16). Ironically, Australia's traditional and social media was more animated and focused solely on the mistreatment of these cattle (even though it was deplorable) than concern for the wider issues of food security and potential disruption to food access for a vulnerable and sizeable population.

Specific concerns over animal welfare then became conflated with anti-Indonesian attitudes within the Australian public generally, especially in relation to the Muslim-style halal slaughtering, and triggered anti-Muslim sentiment. This emotive mix was further fuelled by activists promoting animal rights views, in general, and specifically associating animal cruelty with the transportation of animals. This article analyses the reporting from the traditional and social media on this matter that cascaded after the broadcast and

examines the way news reports were framed to endorse the subsequent banning of the sale of live beef cattle to Indonesia. In the framing of the good and evil binaries of the trigger event, we refer to the concept of Derrida's oppositional binaries (Howells 2013).

The focus of this article is to examine how the media discourse in a developed nation can amplify domestic sociopolitical concerns and create negative binaries between that nation and a developing nation, which can impact on the national political agenda and disrupt food access for a developing country. In the analysis of the media reporting we draw on framing theory (Entman 2003, 2007) to further understand how the framing adopted by the media generated significant and emotional public reaction (Tiplady et al. 2012; Hasreiter 2013) going "beyond a reasonable response" (Staley 2011, p. 18) pressuring the government to ban live cattle exports with "a maelstrom of reaction" (Staley 2011, p. 17) after a "volcanic public response the likes of which many veteran politicians said they've never before witnessed or have seen ever since" (Bettles 2016, para. 6). It was reported that emailed death threats were sent to federal politicians, livestock industry representatives and their families. Overall, the government received more than 150,000 forms of electronic communication calling for a ban (Bettles 2016, para. 20). The Australian Farm Institute Executive Director, Mick Keogh, said that the self-proclaimed activist group GetUp! had "no ownership or understanding of the issue from a rural perspective" and had "acted like a "lynch-mob" in a "hit and run" style campaign" (para. 61).

This article is organised into the following sections: an outline of the complexity of the discourses, the background to live exports, the relationship between Australia and Indonesia, the relevance of our theoretical methodology around framing theory and binary cultural oppositions, details of the case study, and a content analysis followed by an analysis of implications for food policy. Framing refers to the process of forming an understanding or interpretation of an issue (Chong and Druckman 2007). This paper draws on the concept of oppositional binaries to explore how the media tapped into implicit, subliminal cultural understandings and negative impressions and transmitted generalisations of Indonesian culture amongst the Australian populace to frame the stories. It facilitated the shaping of public outrage in a manner that had consequences for promulgating Australians' negative views of Indonesia, Islam and Muslims.

Complexity of discourses

The increasing complexity of the discourses around food issues results in cultural, social and political orientations that impact on the shaping of food policy (Hinrichs 2013). The traditional news media has been found to play an important role in these discourses. The media is not a neutral transmitter of information but frames information within a particular set of cultural meanings in order to connect with a chosen audience (Hossain 2018). Consequently, the traditional news media becomes an active protagonist in the shaping of public and policy discourse (Hossain 2018). The rapid growth of digital media platforms—websites, blogsites and other discourses delivered via digital technology platforms—has created an alternative arena for communicating information and ideas, and at the same time has greater impact because of its capacity to reach a more immediate audience than traditional news outlets (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). The resultant convergence/divergence between the traditional media and social media presents complex challenges for understanding the impact of media on discourses around food security because it has been recognised for some time that traditional media feeds off social media (Ratkiewicz et al. 2011).

Positive contributions of social media to traditional news reporting eventuate potentially from the access to a wider range of more immediate information which can allow for greater transparency, openness and reciprocity. Networked individuals can make use of social media to share and communicate independently of corporate or institutional filters (Newman et al. 2012). Awareness of emerging situations and crises becomes more accessible to a wider part of the populace due to social media such as Facebook and Twitter (AlSayyad and Guvenc 2015) and people have a means of participation. Social media provides communication spaces in which counter discourses can be presented in the legitimization of an organization's responses (Glozer et al. 2018) and is most impactful when used for political purposes (Boulianne 2019).

But other aspects of the interaction between social media and journalism have not resulted in clearly positive outcomes. Whereas traditional news disseminates to a wide audience, the nature of an individual's interaction with social media means that it is a 'narrow-caster', that is, it focuses on a limited range of issues with a self-selected audience. Assuming that content on Twitter is news and viewing Twitter comments as equivalent to interviewing people in the street, fails to recognize its narrow range of interest (Lewis and Molyneux 2018). Furthermore, the self-selectivity of social media sites means that a filtering effect occurs, and reliance on these sites for news can result in an echo chamber effect (Kruse et al. 2018; Lewis and Molyneux 2018). A further limitation on being able to access a representative range of views online is that many people are reluctant to express honest views for fear of online harassment or even potential trouble due to workplace surveillance (Kruse et al. 2018).

Social media can generate and amplify stories that are mirrored in the traditional media (Newman et al. 2012). The phenomenon of viral outrage demonstrates how social media

framing can shape discourses in the traditional media. Moral outrage over questionable, or bad, acts is an important emotion that evokes actions such as shaming and punishment as a way of maintaining social norms. However, when 'tweets' or posts over moral violations are presented on-line, the constraints around interpersonal behavior are absent and the outrage takes on a virtual life of its own (Crockett 2017). The anonymity of the instantaneous inter-connectedness afforded by social media, and the ease of a rejoinder, facilitates a piling-up effect of responses that creates a feedback loop that intensifies and increases the outrage to perceived wrongdoing.

Consequently, social media can act as an accelerant and amplifier of moral outrage to perceived wrongdoing and generate continued news in the traditional media. Many actors are now looking to shape public opinion by generating emotional responses on social media with a view to being able to influence a wider audience through such posts going viral (Rost et al. 2016). In the current study, we investigate how the interaction between social media and traditional media reporting generated a continued emotional response, driven by public outrage, to the export of live cattle.

The circumstances of the beef bans imposed by Australia also point to the need to consider the persuasiveness of cultural understandings and generalisations as a factor in impacting on food access. In the case of the beef exports from Australia to Indonesia, the news story initially broke around concerns for animal welfare, but escalated quickly into a damaging international incident that not only denied reliable access of red meat (protein) to millions of Indonesians, but also damaged the wider trade and security relationship between the two countries. As developing Asian countries rely increasingly on the international trading system to maintain their food security, these trading relationships, such as with Australia and other major exporters, will likely result in collateral political effects that will, in turn, have longer-term policy implications.

Background to live animal exports

During the 1990s, media reports of the increasing volume of trade in live cattle exports to Indonesia were couched in a rationalistic economic perspective. For instance, a report in The Canberra Times (1993) said that the Australian Government was motivated by the forecasts of a growing Indonesian population of (then) 185 million, a rise in living standards and a drive by the government to improve the animal protein levels in Indonesians' diets. The article said the focus would be to sell more live cattle to Indonesia. Then, 2 years later, the same newspaper reported that live cattle exports had hit record levels of 414,000 head (Connors 1995).

Whilst live sheep exports to Middle East countries was also a significant market for Australian graziers, Indonesia had become key importer of live cattle owing to a shortfall in its domestic supply of beef. It had traditionally covered the shortfall through the import of live cattle and Indonesia had become the leading market for Australian live cattle exports in the decade prior to the 2011 beef bans. Other importers of live cattle are China, India, Japan, New Zealand and the United States. However, between 2001 and 2010 approximately 64 per cent of live feeder and slaughter cattle exports were destined for Indonesia (DOA 2015).

The live sheep trade with the Middle East is also considerable. Concerns around animal welfare first arose with sheep exports to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In 1990 Saudi Arabia (alleging disease issues) rejected several shiploads of sheep being transported from Australia. Then, over 2 months in 2002, a total of 15,156 sheep died in four shipments during export to the Middle East due to high temperatures and humidity in the Arabian Gulf. In 2003, the MV Cormo Express incident triggered media controversy and widespread public outrage over failures in animal welfare during transportation (Wright and Muzzatti 2007). In response to this controversy, the Australian government again suspended live exports to Saudi Arabia and the ban was not lifted until mid-2005 when agreement was reached on procedures for off-loading sheep into a temporary feedlot, if a dispute arose. The MV Cormo Express incident gave rise to such a groundswell of concern over animal welfare that it prompted a review of livestock exports (commonly known as the Keniry Review). In 2004, the recommendations of the Keniry Review were implemented, and a sustainable livestock export framework was established (The Commonwealth of Australia 2004).

In 2006, live cattle exports to Egypt were banned after footage sourced by Animals Australia and televised by commercial current affairs television program, *60 Minutes,* showed Australian cattle being subjected to negligent handling and slaughter practices at the Bassateen abattoir in Cairo, Egypt. In response to the public controversy surrounding the footage, live cattle exports to Egypt were banned. Exports only resumed in 2008 after a new abattoir was built and a memorandum of understanding was agreed that animals would be slaughtered in keeping with World Animal Health Organisation standards. More recently, Australia held a moratorium on live sheep exports for 3 months from 1 June 2019 after animal activists presented the Agriculture Minister with footage of poor sheep welfare on-board a ship. As at 2018, government policy was to phase-out live sheep exports over 5 years with a view to ending the trade to the Middle East. Live sheep exports had been worth AUD55 million per year (ABC Online 2018).

Relationships between Australia and Indonesia

Indonesia is the most populous Muslim nation in the world with more than 260 million people and is constitutionally a secular state. The Australian policy outlook, looking ahead a decade, sees Indonesia as an important, emerging regional power and that it is vital to work closely with Indonesia to maintain the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific sphere (Commonwealth of Australia 2009, 2017). The policy orientation of the Australian Government is for its agencies to work to develop the infrastructure, skills and institutions of Indonesia and to support political stability and prosperity in Indonesia (Commonwealth of Australia 2009, 2017; Mackie 2007). Furthermore, the emerging middle classes in regional areas, namely China, India and Indonesia, offer important trading opportunities for growth in the Australian economy.

One important outcome of food policy is to achieve food security especially in developing economies (Kalkuhl et al. 2016; Timmer 2000). The concept of food security has multiple meanings and Mooney and Hunt (2009) addressed how framing could situate, understand and analyse food security. Different constructions of food security tended to focus on the following factors: availability, accessibility, and adequacy (Dithmer and Abdulai 2017; Mooney and Hunt 2009). Adequacy is a vital component in a definition of food security. In Indonesia, as incomes grow, there has been an increasing demand for animal-based protein, with the main sources being chicken and beef (Hutasuhut et al. 2001). Australian meat is sought after in Asia as it has no major cattle diseases such as foot and mouth, brucellosis and tuberculosis (Cottle and Kahn 2014, p. 240 quoting Scoones et al. 2010; Hadi et al. 2002). Since the 1990s, there has been a growing demand for Australian beef in Indonesia, both for packaged boxed and frozen meat distributed through supermarkets as well as live cattle destined for feedlots and slaughter in local abattoirs (Fabiosa 2005). The slaughter requirements for halal certification create a local cultural preference for the live cattle trade (Fabiosa 2005). According to Meat and Livestock Australia the Indonesian beef market was worth AUD977 million in the financial year 2017–2018 (Goodwin 2019). Australian boxed beef and live cattle exports made up 35% of Indonesia's total beef consumption and more than 75% of its total beef imports (Goodwin 2019).

The sea journey to Indonesia from northern Australia takes 5–10 days (Cottle and Kahn 2014). Cattle farmers, especially in the Northern Territory, who export live cattle solely, depend for much of their income on this export trade (Cottle and Kahn 2014). In 2011, the year of the ban, the live cattle trade with Indonesia was an important export earner for Australia beef producers, worth between AUD300 million (Caldwell 2011) to AUD350 annually (Zappone 2011). Australian meat constituted 40 per cent of the beef consumed in Indonesia and it was Australia's third largest market in 2011 exporting between 500,000 and 520,000 head each year (Industry Government Working Group on Live Cattle Exports 2011). Even though the trade had already peaked at 770,000 a head in 2009 (Waldron and Kristedi 2012) it remained a significant Australian export and a significant source of red meat for Indonesia (Associated Press 2011).

The 2011 beef ban had a significant impact on the availability of beef in Indonesia and its effects were pronounced, since it coincided with the Islamic holy month of Ramadan when beef consumption increases significantly. Indonesian commentators questioned why it was necessary to respond to the calls of animal rights activists in Australia, and the Indonesian Agricultural Minister indicated that the ban would simply force Indonesia to source cattle from other countries (specifically, Brazil) which he said did not concern itself with slaughter practices within Indonesia (Dibley 2011).

In Western culture, there exists a complex set of attitudes and ethical considerations towards the treatment of animals (Kelch 2014). Predominantly, organisations like the RSPCA and veterinarian associations reflect wider community attitudes towards treating animals in a manner to avoid pain and suffering, either by neglect or intentional acts of violence. This animal welfare perspective contrasts with the animal rights movement which would reject any use of animals and would promote veganism as the moral baseline (Francione 2010; Singer 2015). These conflicting views of the treatment of animals problematise the concept of animal cruelty (Evans 2018).

Islamic belief is that animals should be slaughtered avoiding unnecessary pain and suffering (Kelch 2014). Under the conventions of halal slaughter the animal must have its throat cut and it must be done quickly and in one cut (Alford 2011). The issue of stunning in Islamic tradition is ambiguous, the only stipulation is that the animal be alive (Zoethout 2013). In Australia, there is a handful of exemptions to prior stunning in order to conduct religious slaughter (halal and kosher) (RSPCA 2015), but the animal is to be stunned post-cut (Zoethout 2013).

The beef ban surfaced underlying tensions in the Australia and Indonesia relationship, in which Australians see themselves as superior. This attitude has been maintained by what Philpott (2001) described as "fear", based on "a fear of invasion" (Philpott 2001, p. 372), as "an integral and inescapable element of Australia's relations with Indonesia" (Philpott 2001, p. 371). There has also been a concern about taking actions that might weaken the Indonesian Government lest they create instability in the country (McDougall and Edney 2010). Although there was initial Australian

media interest in Indonesia at the time of its proclamation of independence in 1945 and subsequent occupation by Dutch military forces, there was only perfunctory interest in the following decades (Torney-Parlicki 2000). Australia's first foreign newspaper correspondent to Indonesia, for example, did not arrive until 1964 (from the now defunct Melbourne Herald) (Mackie 1996). The ABC has been the only other Australian news organisation with a correspondent in Jakarta and that role has been occupied since 1959 (Torney-Parlicki 2000). Even by the 1990s there was still only limited knowledge of Indonesian and other Asian cultures in Australian art, for example (Broinowski 1996).

The Indonesian Government has displayed ongoing sensitivity to the way in which Indonesian society is portrayed in the Australian media. On 10 March 2010 the Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was the first Indonesian president to address the Australian parliament and in this address, he said: "we still have a lot of work to do when it comes to appreciating the facts of each other's national life" (Yudhoyono 2010, para. 51). While not singling out the media he said that "the most persistent problem in our relations is the persistence of age-old stereotypes—misleading, simplistic mental caricatures that depict the other side in a bad light" (Yudhoyono 2010). Concerns have been raised over the limitations of media reporting on bilateral issues in both Australia and Indonesia (Tranter 2012). Also, Mackie (2007) noted that there were deep-seated suspicions in Indonesia about the motivations behind Australian policy and actions which give rise to a volatility in the relationship between the two countries.

Method: framing as a theoretical lens for analysis

This research conducted two aspects of analysis. First, a search of the news database Google News for reports was conducted for reports immediately after the 30 May 2011 airing of the ABC program. We logged comments about trade with Indonesia from traditional media outlets, politicians, farmers, commentators and letters to the editor. We noted the activist groups named or interviewed in the reports and searched their websites, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds for their post-30 May reactions and for the month after the telecast. We selected (and de-identified) comments relevant to the trigger event. We placed the content in the frames of pro-export, anti-export, pro-Australia/anti-Indonesia and anti-Muslim. Islam has been conflated with terrorism for some time (Said 2003) and media reporting tends to portray a negative perception of Indonesia (Mahony 2010).

Frames have been defined as a schematic of interpretation that enables one to organise and interpret occurrences of information (Goffman 1974). Framing is particularly relevant in explaining how communications can be tailored to incline people to think from a specific perspective (Chong and Druckman 2007). Entman (2007) defined framing as a process of selecting a few aspects of an issue and assembling them in a way to promote a specific interpretation. This process of framing can have significant consequences, such as when by-stander support is mobilised for collective action (Benford and Snow 2000). Frames operate in a dynamic manner, and there is a cascading interaction between actors, especially elites interacting with media and public (Entman 2003). Framing in the media is an interactive discourse where the media reports events using a frame of reference that connects with pre-existing schemas or meaning-structures amongst people (Ortiz-Miranda et al. 2016). Frames can be more persuasive if they activate strong values, since by doing so they raised the salience of ideas as well as elicit a strong effective response (Entman 2007). The key steps of framing as a tool in political communications and influence are agenda-setting, providing a causal understanding, delivering a moral judgement and offering a solution (Entman 1993, 2007).

The use of binary theory as an analytical tool can be traced to Claude Levi-Strauss and Jacques Derrida. Levi-Strauss (1978) proposed the concept of binary opposition by which he argued that cultural narratives consisted of binaries that set up oppositions which can create a conflict, or sense of fear, of the opposite side of the binary. Derrida further developed the understanding of binary opposition, where he said that one term governed the other and at the same time de-valued the other (Derrida 1978, 1981a). Binary oppositions are not neutral but imply that one pole is positive and the other negative. Attached to the poles are a hierarchy of paired meanings that culturally subordinate the negative pole to the positive (e.g. male–female; nature–culture) (Derrida 1981b; Johnson 2004). Binaries work in opposition so that meaning is influenced by the dominant pole that determines the perception of reality and shapes how we understand the world. Importantly, Derrida argued that it was necessary to deconstruct these binaries and challenge why one pole was assumed to be culturally privileged over the inferior pole (Culler 2007).

A preferred theme of binary analysis is the examination about power relations, and how it turns to conflict between the dominated and the dominant. Thus, references identified in news articles describing a comparison between developed and developing countries are, in themselves, a power binary that needs to be treated cautiously. The binary of developed/developing is used to situate analysis in the existing body of research rather than using binary to ascribe any special meanings to 'developed' and 'developing' (Landow 2006; Scott 1994). In this paper, binary oppositions are employed as a tool in the deconstruction of the framing of the beef ban within a specific social and cultural logic, as represented

in traditional news reports and social media postings and reactions.

Framing around the beef ban

The dynamics of social framing being used as political communication is examined in this paper. We analyse the banning of beef exports by Australia to Indonesia in 2011 as a case study after the Australian media had fomented a storm of public protest over videos of animals being slaughtered for meat consumption in Indonesia. Although the two countries were on friendly diplomatic relations, and officially saw each other as important trading partners, the Australian government of the day banned beef exports in response to public opinion that was transmitted and amplified through domestic traditional media and social media postings and reactions.

The trigger communication in the controversy culminating in the beef bans with Indonesia was the investigative current affairs report on the ABC that set-in motion a news and social media agenda around animal mistreatment. We did not analyse media coverage before the trigger event because this research specifically focused on the way in which the trigger television report was framed. The causal understanding that was implicitly conveyed, through a set of cultural stereotypes, depicted Australians as 'sophisticated' and 'kind to animals' whereas Indonesians were portrayed as 'cruel to animals', 'untrustworthy' and 'dangerous'. These stereotypes were projected through photographic images and descriptions as a set of binaries that bestowed moral superiority on the Australian public. These binaries were used to convey a causal understanding and implicitly a moral judgement that demanded a specific course of action, namely the immediate banning of live cattle exports.

The case study—the 2011 beef ban

In 2010, the ABC televised footage of sheep being handled and slaughtered brutally in Kuwait in preparation for a three-day festival. Some 5 months later, the ABC screened the trigger report showing footage of Australian cattle in Indonesian abattoirs being killed using techniques not consistent with the World Animal Health Organisation standards. There was an immediate public outcry in Australia and animal rights groups and activists used social media to mobilise enough outrage that the Government imposed a ban the next day on live cattle exports to the 11 abattoirs identified or referred to in the report (Petrie 2016). As well as social media, the news media also amplified the concerns about animal cruelty and called for the Government to act by banning all live cattle exports.

Within days of the ABC's report, the Australian activist group GetUp! had set up an on-line petition to ban live cattle exports and had obtained more than 230,000 signatures (Grattan 2011a). The group mobilised online comments with the hashtag: #EndLiveExport, as a way of popularising and promulgating messages. The three main activist groups of the campaign identified in the corpus of research material were: the RSPCA of Australia, Animals Australia and GetUp!. Their activist work was supported publicly by one independent federal politician, and two political parties, the Nick Xenophon Team and The Australian Greens. GetUp! set up a direct email link on its website for the public to email directly the then Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, demanding she stop all live cattle exports. A range of other groups rallied on Facebook. These included: Vets Against Live Export and Animals Australia Unleashed (a youth version of the Animals Australia group) with links to each other's website content. The NSW Animal Justice party also campaigned on social media against live animal exports (it had been approved as a political party just before the ABC report). It told the ABC it had "received a spike in interest since the live export debate began and was highlighted on this week's ABC Four Corners" (Jeanes 2011, para. 3). The Federal Government announced on 8 June 2011 it had suspended all exports of live cattle to Indonesia (Willingham and Allard 2011). The Sydney Morning Herald credited social media with the success of the speedy ban with the headline: "People-power victory on live exports" (Grattan 2011a). In contrast, academics have described it as "policy on the run" (Blanchett and Zeller 2012, p 56).

Subsequently, on 1 March 2012, the newly formed Veterinarians Against Live Export (VALE) established a website stating in a media release online launch that the group: "counts among its members and advisors two professors of animal welfare in Australian veterinary schools and an on-ship veterinarian who has first-hand experience of the live trade" (VALE 2012, para 2), adding: "it has repeatedly been demonstrated that the trade is very risky and unreliable" (VALE 2012, para 7). The Parliament of Australia website contains a chronology of responses to the trigger event. It states that GetUp! gained more than 200,000 signatures for a ban of live exports within 3 days (Petrie 2016). On 2 June, a member of parliament presented a petition signed by 40,649 people calling for a ban on live exports to the Middle East and in August another petition with 38,500 signatures was presented making similar demands (Petrie 2016). The flooding of politicians' in-boxes with protest emails proved to be powerful.

Online postings were often vitriolic, inflammatory, inciting murder, and were racist and abusive. Examples of Facebook comments from "friends" of Animals Australia were: "The country of torture (Indonesia); "Damn halal crap in the abattoirs", "… go back to their own country", "I'm sick and tired of these people trying to change us Aussies!"; "Their mindset is that's okay to torture animals, it's the norm and

Table 1 Social media postings—source and URL

Source	URL
RSPCA	https://www.rspca.org.au/media-centre/2011/cruel-cattle-exports-indonesia-must-halt-immediately https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=rspca%20live%20cattle%202011&epa=SEARCH_BOX
Animals Australia	https://www.animalsaustralia.org/investigations/live-export-investigations.php https://www.animalsaustralia.org/videos/tommy.php
Animals Australia Unleashed (youth group of Animals Australia)	https://shop.animalsaustralia.org/campaigns/live_export
GetUp!	https://www.facebook.com/pg/GetUpAustralia/posts/?ref=page_internal
Stop Live Export of Cattle to Indonesia	https://www.stopliveexports.org/about-stop-live-exports#how-are-animals-treated-once-they-reach-indonesia https://www.facebook.com/groups/133471153397761/
Vets Against Live Export	http://www.vale.org.au/
NSW Animal Justice	https://nsw.animaljusticeparty.org/campaign/ban-live-export/
Andrew Wilkie (Independent federal politician)	http://andrewwilkie.org/project/live-export/ http://andrewwilkie.org/project/animal-welfare-2/
Nick Xenophon (minor party federal politician)	https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id:%22legislation/billhome/s830%22
Adam Bandt (political party The Australian Greens)	https://adam-bandt.greensmps.org.au/articles/bill-ban-live-exports

comes under the label of their 'customs" (see Table 1: Animals Australia). Examples of Facebook comments from "friends" of GetUp! Were: "Time to tackle "Torture Corp", "it is too distraught to be true", "so un Australian"; "It is the cruel slaughter I have a problem with"; "in our abattoirs the standards are high"; "other countries who won't accept our slaughter practices for stupid religious reasons"; "probably would of been easier to just go shoot all the farmers" (see Table 1: Getup!).

Analysis of media reports

The reports in the media merged cultural overtones into protests over animal cruelty. For example, among the major Australian newspapers, *The Australian* newspaper said in a headline: "That's not halal killing: Indonesian cleric joins attack on cattle slaughter" (Alford and Massola 2011). An article in Brisbane's *The Courier Mail* referred to the slaughter practices as "medieval-style cruelty" (Wockner 2011, para. 10) and an editorial in *The Australian* was headlined: "Australians must help stop cruelty" (The Australian 2011) implying that cruelty was part and parcel of Islamic practices and this also placed Muslim halal killing in a binary with Australian killing practices.

In the days immediately following the television report and banning, the media response focused on animal cruelty with *The Sunday Telegraph* covering a specific protest in Queensland: "Protest calls for end to cattle exports" (Fraser 2011). ABC News reported the federal member of a northern New South Wales electorate responding to the ban saying: "Saffin welcomes live export ban—as a first step" (ABC 2011c). There were also some calls from the traditional media to adopt a more considered approach. An opinion-maker wrote as a headline in Melbourne's *Herald Sun* newspaper: "Emotion helps cook up a storm" (Price 2011) and described the reaction as irrational. The ban did have an immediate impact on the financial viability of Australian beef grazier industry (The Sydney Morning Herald 2011b, c). In *The Daily Telegraph* the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, representing the cattle industry, was quoted as saying the ban "will destroy the Australian cattle industry but won't put an end to animal cruelty" (Lentini 2011). Another *The Daily Telegraph* commentator wrote the "live export ban hurts us too" (Devine 2011). These concerns over the loss of livelihoods resulted in a class action litigation by livestock groups against the federal government. Indonesia retaliated to the ban announcing that it may be discriminatory because "other nations Australia exported to also had issues in relation to animal welfare" (Vasek 2011) and Indonesia threatened to lodge a protest with the World Trade Organisation. *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran the headline "Indonesians brand cattle ban 'discrimination' as diplomatic tensions grow" (The Sydney Morning Herald 2011d).

A prominent senator said the ban was an over-reaction and that it punished exporters and slaughterhouses that complied with animal welfare regulations. In the same article, a central Queensland grazier was quoted complaining that 1200 Queensland jobs depended on the live export industry and that graziers were already struggling financially because of the drought. Pressure from Australian cattle farmers expedited the partial lifting of the ban on 6 July 2011. The lifting

of the live cattle export ban was precipitated by an agreement between the Australian and Indonesian governments to set in place new welfare standards (ABC 2011d) and exporters were required to track all cattle and ensure that abattoirs in Indonesia met international guidelines (Rout and Wilson 2011).

In 2013, the issue of stunning was still alive when *The Herald Sun* published a report "Indonesian fatwa against stunning—blow to North Queensland cattle exports" (Herald Sun 2013). The article described how fatwas were being decreed by a regional cleric in Indonesia banning pre-slaughter stunning (Nason 2013). However, the Chief Executive of the Livestock Exporters Council said that by June 2013 stunning rates in Indonesia were at 90% compared with 16% in 2011 (Bloomfield 2015). The insecurity created in Indonesia with the banning led its government to announce that it was moving towards a self-sufficient beef industry and that Australian beef imports would be "phased out over the next three or 4 years" (Roberts 2011). Within a week of the original report, the Australian government went a step further and suspended all exports (Petrie 2016; Willingham and Allard 2011) of live cattle to Indonesia for 6 months and this extended ban included abattoirs in Indonesia that were compliant with the World Animal Health Organisation standards.

At the same time, the overwhelming public response on social media was one of outrage over the perceived animal cruelty. A combination of special interest and lobby groups fuelled this social media outrage with major email and online signature campaigns. The RSPCA and Animals Australia organised protest rallies and conducted on-line campaigns. A Fremantle group, Stop Live Exports.Org, set up a Facebook page that used the explanatory strap line of "live exports, cruel and unnecessary". The activist group, GetUp!, set up a direct email via its website for the public to protest to the Prime Minister of Australia, calling on her to stop all live exports. Posts on the GetUp! Facebook page referred to "cruel slaughter", being "un-Australian", while posts on the Animals Australia Facebook referred to Indonesia being "cruel, sadistic and heartless", the "country of torture" and that torturing animals there was "the norm". Animals Australia also attempted to humanise the cattle by attributing to them names (e.g. 'Tommy', see Table 1). A range of other Facebook groups also rallied—Vets Against Live Export and Animals Australia Unleashed. A newspaper commentator referred to "the barbaric treatment of cattle" (Devine 2011) whilst a Queensland Letter to the editor of Melbourne's *Weekly Times* wrote: "It is disappointing when our hard-earned industry reputation is trashed by an untrained, cigarette-smoking slaughter-man with a blunt knife" (Crombie 2011, para. 4) (the ABC program had filmed one of the abattoir workers smoking a cigarette while brutalising cattle). The ABC maintained concerns over the trade when it published a report online later in 2011 that "the footage showed animals in Indonesia dying slow and painful deaths and undermined previous assurances that cattle from Australia were slaughtered humanely" (ABC 2011e, para. 3).

The media campaign stirred up intense political reaction, with a member of parliament quoted in a Mackay, Queensland newspaper saying that attention should not focus on Australian farmers but on the Indonesian meat-workers and their "bastardised interpretation of Islamic halal practices" (Garvey 2011). Another member of parliament told the ABC "if animals were treated in this way in Australia those responsible would be going to jail" (Kirk 2011). The director of the Asian Law Centre and the Centre for Islamic Law and Society at the University of Melbourne, Tim Lindsey, said in *The Australian* that a "clash-of-civilisations approach" situated the mistreatment as a product of Islamic doctrine (Lindsey 2011, para 4). He pointed out "two misconceptions underpinning many reactions" (Lindsey 2011, para 1): first, that the cruelty was part of Islamic values and, second, that there are no animal welfare regulations in Indonesia (Lindsey 2011). Regulations did exist but were not always enforced (Dibley 2011).

Discussion

The framing presented in the media campaign conflated issues over animal welfare with cultural understandings amongst a developed nation (Australia) towards a developing nation (Indonesia). Australian newspapers conflated ethnicity (Indonesia), religion (Islam) and a callous indifference to animal welfare in reports. Before the furore, it was observed that the Australian media displayed very generalised and stereotypical accounts of Muslims (Manning 2006a) and the views in the media amounted to an attempt to generate fear of Muslims to sell stories. Manning (2006b) in a radio broadcast summarised his content analysis of the major Sydney newspapers by saying that Muslims were depicted as "pre-civilised, shifty, tricky and dangerous".

Frames operate in a dynamic manner and when broadcast by media they generate a series of cascading interactions between actors and become particularly persuasive if they trigger strong values (Entman 2007). The prevalence of the cultural binaries in the traditional and social media reports resulted in stereotyped views of Indonesians dominating people's perceptions of motives and these cultural stereotypes became enmeshed with people's values about the treatment of animals and abhorrence of cruelty to animals (Tannenbaum et al. 2011). Furthermore, media framing successfully established that the concerns were exclusively an animal welfare issue and any concerns about access by Indonesians to obtaining meat were obviated. The prevalence of the values implicit in the cultural binary amplified the

impact of the framing and made it more plausible, convincing, and seemingly morally correct.

The framing linked a binary about cultural stereotypes (Australian vs. Indonesian) with a binary about attitudes towards the treatment of animals (humane vs. inhumane). This framing triggered an emotive and value-laden public response and set in motion an agenda for political action (i.e. banning the live cattle exports). Applying Entman's framework (2003, 2007), the framing effectively created a causal understanding (i.e. cruel Indonesians/Islam/Muslims mistreat animals), delivered a moral judgment (i.e. Australians can exercise moral authority over the Indonesians) and implied a clear solution (i.e. live cattle exports needed to be stopped). Strong values about an issue increases an individual's susceptibility to framing as well as resistance to disconfirming evidence (Chong and Druckman 2007). In the case of the beef bans the content of the media was framed around strong values of abhorrence of animal cruelty and this framing was strengthened by implicit cultural binaries.

The media relies on binaries as useful communication devices to attract attention and to simplify stories. Binaries contain oppositional concepts and when applied to reporting on social interactions, recreate a set of stereotyped interpretations. Binaries incorporated into stories in newspapers will identify key actors involved in a conflict or dispute and separate them into meaningful opposition (Hartley 2012). In news reports, attaching strong opposing positive–negative values to the binary will also heighten its impact and effectiveness in ordering meaning. News reporting is not disinterested. It seeks to pit one side against another to create a story that interests the reader. Journalists are encouraged to find conflict and to identify "sides". The stance of neutrality in news reporting is simply a device by which a story is framed around describing the conflict between two sides (Boudana 2016). In this case study, social media amplified the binaries with moral outrage animated by a sense of "good" versus "evil". News is implicit in this framing of the binary with social media adding emphasis to differences, with one side positioned against another and carrying implicit oppositional values attached to the binary poles.

In reporting on the slaughter of Australian beef cattle in Indonesian abattoirs, the Australian media in conjunction with social media, framed the reports around the binary of the West versus Islam, and associated a hierarchy of other meanings with this opposition, namely 'kind', 'humane', 'civilised', 'modern', 'trustworthy' Australians with the positive pole (West), and 'cruel', 'inhumane', 'primitive', 'medieval', 'untrustworthy' Indonesians with the negative pole (and overlaid with a Islam/Muslim) of the binary. This binary pre-existed and was easily amplified and co-constructed by the public interacting with social media and this propagation of the binary became fertile ground for the political adventurism of interest and lobby groups to exploit this story in Australia. This simplification portrayed the societies of the two countries in a stereotypical way that created a dichotomy in the political relationship between the two countries and threatened ongoing trade and regional security relations. Antagonistic news reports of the Australian live cattle trade with Indonesia helped promote sensationalism by collapsing a range of issues into a simplistic "good guys" versus "bad guys" framing.

Implications for food policy

Whilst policymakers consider media coverage and audience response, and policy might as such be constrained by this consideration (Foyle 2004), it would be unusual for government policy to immediately reflect the demands of a public outcry in policy areas involving other countries. Although public opinion might constrain some policy options, policymakers attempt to keep control of the policy agenda and will make efforts to frame the policy agenda in such a way that it does not obviously conflict with the public's view (Foyle 2004; McDougall and Edney 2010). However, in the case of the beef bans the government lost control of the food policy agenda and by setting in place the live cattle ban it was seen to have bowed to the demands of "people power" (Grattan 2011a; Schoenmaker and Alexander 2012). Animal welfare concerns over live exports had been an issue for some time and it appeared that the Government had not monitored the success of previous reforms. In relation to the 2011 outcry, the RSPCA had alerted the Government some 6 months earlier of concerns about cruel slaughter practices in Indonesia. In response, the Agriculture Minister had written to the cattle export industry, but he had not consulted Indonesian officials (Grattan 2011b).

Not only did the public outcry and subsequent ban on live cattle exports align with partisan political interests in Australia, it also played into a political orchestration in Indonesia for self-sovereignty (Trewin 2014). National-scale self-sufficiency in food has long been of central ideological importance in Indonesia and the beef ban re-ignited this issue (Neilson and Wright 2017). Food self-sufficiency has become masked under a desire for self-sovereignty in Indonesia and there is pressure to limit food imports (Trewin 2014). Neilson and Wright (2017, p. 136) observed that the issue in Indonesia was about risks to food security since food had been "held hostage to the moral impulses of a foreign country". The subsequent actions of the Indonesian Government can be framed from this perspective. After the beef ban was lifted, the Indonesian Government restricted the number of import licenses with Australia and raised other administrative barriers (e.g. documentation requirements).

Concerns in developing countries over food self-sufficiency escalated after abrupt price rises in food during the

1970s and more recently after the 2007–2008 food crisis (Clapp 2017). These concerns give rise to a conflict in food policy discussion as domestic political concerns over access to food compete with the economic benefits of international trade in food. The concept of a comparative advantage in economic theory identifies efficiencies in food output as a result of countries investing in types of food production that is more suited to their economic, social and geographical conditions. For instance, any shift in resources towards increasing beef cattle production in Indonesia is likely to compete for agricultural land that is currently used for grain crops, whereas in Australia, cattle are grass-fed and do not displace other agricultural output.

The bans were driven by mainstream media interacting with social media to orchestrate a positive feedback loop in which the public outcry became even more strident. The key driving forces behind the beef bans were the pressure of media stories, social media activism and the sentiment of the Australian public in relation to animal welfare and long-standing perceptions the Australian public held of Indonesian people as being inferior, or at least backward. However, there is a potential and latent dysfunctionality of consumerist thinking when it is amplified by the media and social media and projected onto the cultural practices of developing countries. The emotive framing of the media stories pressured politicians to respond in a hasty fashion that was favourable to the interests of pressure groups but not to the food security of its major trading partner Indonesia. There was no formulation of a more considered policy agenda. In the case of the beef ban, politicians were unable to counter the power of the framing in the media and avalanche of social media reaction that had exploited an emotional binary. Subsequently, there was an incoherent policy response.

The impact of media reporting in intensifying a public reaction is not a new phenomenon (Protess et al. 1991). However, the capacity of social media and covert actors to shift the government agenda is a potentially disquieting development. These covert actors are not publicly accountable, nor do they hold the public endorsement of elected government actors, and yet through the skilful use of social media, leveraging off traditional media, they can amplify partisan interests and influence the wider public perception of events. The foregoing analysis has drawn on the way that cultural binaries were enacted in the framing of the events to explain how the political agenda of the elected government was engulfed by an evolving and unrestrained media orchestration that encouraged a mutual construction with the public.

This analysis implies some deeper responses are needed in the social milieu in relation to way citizens of developed nations perceive developing nations. Pupavac (2010) has articulated concern that the developed West projects a set of romanticised ideals upon what is expected of developing nations. According to Pupavac (2010) these ideals stem from a kind of moral consumerism that views the developing world in an ambivalent, but patronising way. In a consumerist society, Campbell (2005) argued that consumers seek morally idealised self-images and find pleasure in expressing and viewing these images of self. Moral consumerism involves appropriating idealistic stances on issues that offend the sensibilities of the developed world and then projecting them onto the developing world.

Conclusion

In the current case, social media was found to interact with traditional media to elevate issues that triggered moral outrage and attempted to influence the government into implementing specific policy actions. This interaction between media, the public responding via social media, and policy actors responding to the outcry goes towards limiting, delimiting, defining and shaping policy outcomes. The nature of the technology associated with the social media means that the individual is likely to experience more customised access to specific content (either from self-selections or proprietary filters) and is subsequently exposed to a narrower range of issues and views (Althaus and Tewksbury 2002). Also, we see social media operating not in isolation but as an adjunct to the traditional broadcast and print media to amplify concerns, to further inflame public outrage, and to provide conduits for direct pressure on policy actors (Jenkins 2006; Toepfl 2011).

According to the Entman framework (2007), elites have a key role in setting agendas and developing them through interactions with other key actors. The theory around the framing of agendas implies that a balance is achieved between the interactions of different actors in the frame building process but assumes that elite political actors have control over the process (Entman 2004). However, the current study demonstrates the capacity of the traditional media to inflame public outrage and how its concomitant interaction with social media has introduced a wider range of actors, some marginal and even covert, into the shaping of the political agenda. In the case of the beef bans, the political elite had difficulty deflecting an emotive agenda achieved through the adept use of framing that evoked strong value judgements using cultural binaries. There was a clear correspondence between the messages on the traditional media and the new media (Boynton and Richardson 2016). Covert actors, activists and lobby groups making sophisticated use of a mix of digital technologies can promote single-agenda issues to achieve influence over communication with the political process (Juris 2005).

The events analysed in this case study resonate with the shift from a theoretical economic perspective dominating

food policy to a wider set of stakeholders and concerns in relation to food production and access to food (Eakin et al. 2017). Ongoing concerns by political actors in developing countries about access to food are becoming enmeshed with the cultural values held by people in developed countries about the supply of food, such as emerging views around the cultivation of farm animals (Lancaster and Boyd 2015) and critics of the industrial treatment of animals (Arcari 2017). The discourses around food policy are becoming increasingly complex as the media represents and promotes various agendas in relation to food supply. These often competing and even conflicting views can generate political pressures that can herald the likelihood of policy incoherence (Brooks 2014). Although multi-stakeholder approaches to evolving food policy (Breeman et al. 2015) might be a way of achieving clearer and coherent food policy (Friedmann 2005), there appears to be strong limitations and constraints on maintaining policy in the public forum when the media is addressing emotive issues that can trigger public outrage.

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